

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (previously presented) A computer network for processing a plurality of rental vehicle transactions between a central server and a plurality of geographically diverse client processors, said computer network comprising said central server and said client processors, at least some of said client processors being located at a branch office whereat a rental vehicle service is provided to a consumer of said rental vehicle transactions, said central server having a stored program that is configured to process a plurality of rental vehicle transactions corresponding to rental vehicle reservations via a communication between said central server and at least one client processor, each of said client processors having a web browser that is configured to access said program over the Internet and transact said transactions on said server so that the entirety of data communicated within said transaction is available to said program, and wherein said program is configured to open a rental contract for a plurality of said reservations, modify said rental contracts after opening, and close said rental contracts in response to input from said client processors.
2. (previously presented) The computer network of claim 1 wherein said program is configured to be GUI based.
3. (previously presented) The computer network of claim 1 wherein said program is configured to communicate with any of said client processors upon proper sign in and recognition of said processor as an authorized processor.
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5. (previously presented) The computer network of claim 1 wherein said program is configured to correlate at least one of said client processors with a specific geographic location as part of an authorization process.

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7. (previously presented) The computer network of claim 1 wherein said network further comprises a second server, and a load balancer interconnecting said servers, and wherein said load balancer is configured to direct transaction traffic from said client processors between said two servers to minimize delay in processing said transaction traffic.

8. (original) The computer network of claim 7 wherein said network further comprises a LAN interconnecting said servers.

9. (previously presented) The computer network of claim 8 wherein said program is configured to back up transaction data between said two servers.

10. (previously presented) A computer network comprising:
a server processor configured to handle real time processing of transaction requests from a plurality of client processors on a large scale basis, and a WAN interconnecting said plurality of client processors with said server processor, said transaction requests corresponding to a plurality of advance rental vehicle reservations, said advance rental vehicle reservations not being specific as to an individual rental vehicle available for rent from a rental vehicle service provider, a substantial number of said client processors being geographically diverse from said server processor and each other, said client processors being configured to locally process and provide point of sale services for fulfillment of said transactions, said server processor including a program configured to process and accumulate data identifying and correlated to each of said transactions for the business processing of said transaction including an assignment of a specific rental vehicle to said advance rental vehicle reservations, and said server processor

being configured to provide a secure web based browser interface between each of said client processors and said server processor over said WAN for said client processors to access said program.

11. (previously presented) The computer network of claim 10 wherein said program is configured to provide a GUI interface to said client processors.

12. (previously presented) The computer network of claim 10 wherein said program is configured to authorize each client processor prior to providing access to any client processor, and wherein said authorization includes identifying the particular processor and correlating it with a geographic location for said processor.

13. (previously presented) The computer network of claim 12 wherein said program is configured to customize its display in correlation with the particular client processor as it is authorized and allowed access.

14. (original) The computer network of claim 10 wherein each of said client processors is a thin client device.

15. (previously presented) The computer network of claim 10 wherein said program is configured to permit controlled interaction between authorized client processors and said server processor for purposes of entering, modifying, and executing a transaction.

16. (previously presented) An internet enabled automatic rental vehicle transaction system, said system comprising:

an internet web portal configured to allow an authorized purchaser of rental vehicle services to access over the internet a rental vehicle software program resident on a computer system, said rental vehicle software program being configured to automatically respond to a series of commands from said authorized purchaser and communicate an advance rental

vehicle reservation to a second computer system, said advance rental vehicle reservation not being specific as to an individual rental vehicle available for rent from a rental vehicle service provider, said second computer system having a second computer software program resident thereon, said second computer software program being configured to (1) communicate over the internet with a plurality of geographically diverse branch facilities each of which has a plurality of vehicles for rent and (2) process input from at least one of said branch facilities to open, modify, and close a rental contract for said reservation, wherein the rental contract opening includes an assignment of a specific rental vehicle to said reservation, said second computer system being linked to said first computer system.

17. (original) The rental vehicle transaction system of claim 16 wherein said second computer system includes a main frame processor, and a thin client processor located at each branch.

18. (original) The rental vehicle transaction system of claim 17 wherein said second computer system has its operational software on the main frame processor.

19. (original) The rental vehicle transaction system of claim 18 wherein said first computer system includes a main frame, and said main frames are linked together.

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23. (previously presented) A method for administering a computer system configured to process vehicle rental transactions over the internet, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a main frame computer, said main frame computer being configured to communicate over the internet with a GUI web based browser;

providing a plurality of client processors, at least some of said client processors being located at geographically remote locations and wherein each of said client processors has a GUI web based internet browser;

providing for the connection on demand over the Internet between each of said client processors and the main frame computer so that transaction data may be interchanged therebetween for the processing of a plurality of vehicle rental transactions, wherein said main frame computer is configured to execute a business software program in response to input from said client processors to open a plurality of rental contracts for said vehicle rental transactions, modify a plurality of said rental contracts after opening, and close a plurality of said rental contracts.

24. (original) The method of claim 23 further comprising the step of authenticating each client processor prior to connection with the main frame.

25. (previously presented) The method of claim 23 further comprising the step of providing another main frame computer for receiving transactions placed by any one of a plurality of said client processors.

26. (previously presented) The method of claim 25 further comprising the step of providing for communication between each of said client processors and their associated main frame via a GUI web based internet browser.

27. (original) The method of claim 25 further comprising the step of providing for the exchange of transaction data between said two main frame computers.

28. (original) The method of claim 27 further comprising the step of providing for storage of data related to the vehicle rental transactions.

29. (original) The method of claim 28 further comprising the steps of providing multiple processors for receiving incoming client and user requests for access to said main frames, and separately balancing the load between said multiple processors.

30. (currently amended) A method for providing a GUI interface through which an authorized purchaser of rental vehicle services may access a rental vehicle software program resident on a first business computer system; and a GUI interface through which an employee of the rental vehicle provider may access a software program on a second business computer system, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a first business computer system having a software program configured to create a GUI interface;

establishing an Internet link between a computer of said authorized purchaser and the first business computer system, said GUI interface software program being further configured to facilitate functional interaction between the rental vehicle software program and an authorized purchaser logged onto said GUI interface software program to thereby create and manage a rental vehicle reservation with a rental vehicle service provider, said reservation not being specific as to an individual vehicle available for rent from said rental vehicle service provider;

establishing an Internet link between a computer operated by an employee of said rental vehicle provider and said second business computer system, said GUI interface software program being further configured to facilitate functional interaction between the software program resident on said second business computer system and said employee's computer;
executing said software program resident on said second business computer system in response to said functional interaction between that software program and said employee's computer, said executing step comprising to thereby opening, modifying, and closing else a rental contract for said rental vehicle reservation, the rental contract opening including assigning an assignment of a specific rental vehicle to said reservation; and

establishing a link between the first business computer system and the second computer system for functional interaction therebetween relating to said rental vehicle reservation.

31. (currently amended) A method for processing a rental vehicle reservation, the method comprising:

storing data for an advance rental vehicle reservation, the advance rental vehicle reservation not being specific as to an individual vehicle available for rent from a rental vehicle service provider;

receiving input from a user over the Internet and through at least one graphical user interface (GUI) menu; and

executing a business software program that is resident on a computer system in response to the received user input, the business software program executing step comprising being configured to (i) retrieving retrieve the stored data for the advance rental vehicle reservation and (ii) opening, modifying, and closing ~~close~~ a rental contract for the advance rental vehicle reservation, the rental contract opening including an assignment of a specific vehicle to the advance rental vehicle reservation.

32. (previously presented) The method of claim 31 wherein the user comprises an employee of the rental vehicle service provider, and wherein the input receiving step comprises receiving the input from a user computer located in a branch office of the rental vehicle service provider where the employee works.

33. (previously presented) The method of claim 32 further comprising:

receiving a plurality of inputs over time from an authorized purchaser over the Internet and through at least one graphical user interface (GUI) menu; and

executing a rental vehicle software program in response to the received authorized purchaser inputs to create the advance rental vehicle reservation and manage the advance rental vehicle reservation after it has been created; and

wherein the storing step further comprises storing data for the advance rental vehicle reservation in response to rental vehicle software program executing step.

34. (previously presented) The method of claim 32 further comprising performing the method steps for a plurality of advance rental vehicle reservations.

35. (previously presented) The method of claim 34 further comprising automatically generating a plurality of callback flags for the reservations.

36. (previously presented) The method of claim 35 wherein the automatically generating step comprises automatically generating the callback flags based on a plurality of business rules, wherein a plurality of the business rules are driven by data contained in the reservations.

37. (previously presented) The method of claim 35 further comprising providing a GUI menu to the user computer over the Internet which displays callback information regarding the callback flags for the reservations.

38. (currently amended) The method of claim 37 further comprising:
receiving an update as to a the callback information status for a reservation from the user computer over the Internet and through a provided GUI menu; and
updating the callback information status for that reservation in response to the received update.

39. (previously presented) The method of claim 37 wherein the callback flags comprise a plurality of bill-to callback flags.

40. (previously presented) The method of claim 37 wherein the callback flags comprise a plurality of renter callback flags.

41. (previously presented) The method of claim 37 wherein the callback flags comprise a plurality of repair facility callback flags.

42. (previously presented) The method of claim 34 further comprising:
receiving a request from the user computer;
generating a summary that details the reservations for a given day in response to the received request, and
providing a GUI menu to the user computer over the Internet to thereby display the generated summary to the user.

43. (previously presented) The method of claim 32 wherein the reservation has a plurality of bill-to parties, the method further comprising executing the business software program to allocate charges for the reservation among the plurality of bill-to parties therefor.

44. (previously presented) The method of claim 32 wherein the advance rental vehicle reservation comprises a reservation for a class of vehicle available for rent from the rental vehicle service provider.

45. (previously presented) A system for processing a rental vehicle reservation, the system comprising:

- a database in which data for an advance rental vehicle reservation is stored, the advance rental vehicle reservation not being specific as to an individual vehicle available for rent from a rental vehicle service provider; and

- a computer system in communication with the database and in communication with a user computer over the Internet, wherein the computer system has a business software program resident thereon;

- wherein the computer system is configured to execute the business software program to provide a plurality of graphical user interface (GUI) menus for display on the user computer;

- wherein the computer system is further configured to receive input from the user computer over the Internet and through the provided GUI menus; and

- wherein the computer system is further configured to execute the business software program in response to the received user computer input to (i) retrieve the stored data for the advance rental vehicle reservation and (ii) open, modify, and close a rental contract for the advance rental vehicle reservation, the rental contract opening including an assignment of a specific vehicle to the advance rental vehicle reservation.

46. (previously presented) The system of claim 45 wherein the computer system is further configured to:

- execute a rental vehicle software program to provide a plurality of graphical user interface (GUI) menus for display over the Internet on an authorized purchaser computer;
- receive a plurality of inputs over time from the authorized purchaser computer; and

execute the rental vehicle software program in response to the received authorized purchaser computer inputs to create the advance rental vehicle reservation, manage the advance rental vehicle reservation after it has been created, and store data for the advance rental vehicle reservation in the database.

47. (previously presented) The system of claim 45 wherein the database is configured to store data for a plurality of advance rental vehicle reservations, and wherein the business software program is further configured to open, modify, and close a plurality of rental contracts for the plurality of advance rental vehicle reservations.

48. (previously presented) The system of claim 47 wherein the business software program is further configured to automatically generate a plurality of callback flags for the reservations.

49. (previously presented) The system of claim 48 wherein the business software program is further configured to automatically generate the callback flags based on a plurality of business rules, wherein a plurality of the business rules are driven by data contained in the reservations.

50. (previously presented) The system of claim 48 wherein the business software is further configured to provide a GUI menu to the user computer which displays callback information regarding the callback flags for the reservations.

51. (previously presented) The system of claim 48 wherein the business software program is further configured to update a callback information status for the reservations in response to the received user computer input.

52. (previously presented) The system of claim 48 wherein the callback flags comprise at least one of the group consisting of a plurality of bill-to callback flags, a plurality of renter callback flags, and a plurality of repair facility callback flags.

53. (previously presented) The system of claim 47 wherein the business software program is further configured to generate a summary that details the reservations for a given day in response to a request received from the user computer, and wherein the business software program is further configured to provide a GUI menu to the user computer to thereby display the generated summary.

54. (previously presented) The system of claim 45 wherein the reservation has a plurality of bill-to parties, and wherein the business software program is further configured to allocate charges for the reservation among the plurality of bill-to parties therefor.

55. (previously presented) The system of claim 45 wherein the advance rental vehicle reservation comprises a reservation for a class of vehicle available for rent from the rental vehicle service provider.

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69. (new) The method of claim 31 wherein the rental contract modifying comprises changing a vehicle type for the rental contract.

70. (new) The method of claim 31 wherein the rental contract modifying comprises extending a rental duration for the rental contract.

71. (new) The method of claim 31 wherein the input receiving step comprises receiving a plurality of the inputs over time, and wherein the executing step further comprises:
opening the rental contract in response to a first received input;
modifying the rental contract in response to a later received input; and
closing the rental contract in response to a still later received input.

72. (new) The system of claim 45 wherein the rental contract modification comprises a change to a vehicle type for the rental contract.

73. (new) The system of claim 45 wherein the rental contract modification comprises an extension to a rental duration for the rental contract.